

A
SERMON

PREACHED

In a Congregation in the City of

EXON,

ON THE

Thanksgiving-day,

Thursday, April 16. 1696.

By a Minister of the Gospel.

L O N D O N,

Printed for Robert Osborne Bookseller, near
the Bear in Exon: 1696.

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1 Samuel 12. 24.

*Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth, with
all your heart; for consider how great things
he hath done for you.*

IF we look back to the eighth Chapter of this first Book of *Samuel*, we shall find, that the *Israelites* were extremely desirous of a King. The Government which God had set up amongst them, did not satisfy them: They were fond of being like to other Nations round about them: They would have a King to Rule over them: They were weary of that easie, that gentle Government, which God had Erected; they would have one that should Rule with a more absolute sway, and exercise a Power more Despotical amongst them. But this was a most apparent affront to their God; it was an ungrateful contempt of his Government. Therefore says God to *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* 8. 7. *They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not Reign over them; i. e.* This their eager desire of a King, was not so much a quarrel they had against *Samuel*, as it was a daring affront to God himself, who had placed them under that sort of Government by Judges.

In this *chap. 12th. verse 1.* we have an account of *Samuel's* discourse to this People; in which he tells them, that he had granted their request, had complied with their unreasonable demand, and had appointed them a King. Then he goes about to convince them of their Ingratitude to their God, in their having been so impatiently importunate for a King. He recounts to them, how eminently God had appeared on their behalf: How signally he had delivered them;

How does God deliver them

with what wonders of Providence he had favoured them ; how he had many times secured them from the hands of their cruel Enemies, who sought their destruction. Then in the close he very tartly upbraids them with their disingenuous carriage to their God in their peremptory request of a King, *verse 12. Ye said unto me, nay, but a King shall Reign over us. when the Lord your God was your King,*

Farther to convince them of their sin against their God, and of the Divine displeasure against themselves for so insolent a piece of Ingratitude : He calls for a Storm of Thunder, and of Rain, *verse 17. Is it not Wheat-Harvest to day? I will call to the Lord, and he shall send Thunder, and Rain, that you may perceive, and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a King. And immediately such a storm of Thunder, and Rain, was sent from Heaven, which was somewhat unusual in those Countreys in time of Harvest, as some assure us. This Judgment somewhat awakened them ; hereupon they address Samuel to intercede with God for them, verse 19. And all the people said unto Samuel, pray for thy Servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not, for we have added to all our sins this Evil, to ask us a King. Samuel tells them, that he would become a Supplicant on their behalf. For, says he, verse 23. God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you. As if he had said, I am sensible that it is my unquestionable duty to pray for you ; as I am a man, an Israelite, a Minister, I am obliged to do this for you. Nay, so far was he from putting them off with a Denial, that he would not only pray for them, which was part of his Office, but as a faithful Minister, he would likewise instruct, and advise them for their advantage, and happiness ; he would discover to them what course they should take, what methods they should pursue, to become a peaceful, a prosperous, and a flourishing People. Therefore he says, *I will teach you the good, and the right way:* A way far beyond any thing of the best Humane Politicks whatever ; a Method, for safety, and settlement, far surmounting any thing they could possibly contrive And this way he lays before them in the words of my Text, viz.*

Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth, with all your heart ;
for

for consider how great things he hath done for you.

In which words you have these things considerable ; as

1. An Exhortation to a duty. *Fear the Lord, and serve him in truth, with all your heart.*

In which Exhortation you may again consider,

(1.) The *Matter* exhorted to ; which is, to fear the Lord, and serve him in truth, *i. e.* They were to worship him with a Worship of his own prescription, and of Divine Institution.

(2.) You have the *Manner* prescribed, how this duty is to be performed ; *with all the heart.*

2. You have the Encouraging Motive laid down to induce them to the more careful discharge of this prescribed duty ; and that in those words ; *For consider how great things he hath done for you.*

From the words I would present you with this Truth to be the subject of a short Discourse ; *viz*

Doct. *That the consideration of those great things which God has done for a People , should be a powerful Argument to induce them to fear, and serve him in truth, and with all their hearts.*

VVhat I have to say upon this subject, I shall confine to these following Generals. As,

(1.) I shall briefly shew you what we are here to understand by fearing, and serving of God.

(2.) VVhat it may import to serve God in truth, and with all the heart.

(3.) Prove that the Consideration of the great things God has done for a people should be a powerful Argument to persuade them to serve God in Truth, and with all the Heart.

(4.) Shall make some practical improvement of it.

(1.) I shall briefly shew you what we are here to understand by fearing, and serving of God.

I shall not at present detain you with a discourse about the various significations of the word [*fear*] it will be sufficient for my present purpose to prove to you that this word many times in the Sacred Scriptures, is of so ample a signifi-

a signification, as to denote the whole worship of God. Thus, *Deut. 10. 12. And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God? i. e. to adore, and worship him in opposition to all Heathenish Idolatries, and false-worship. And thus, Psal. 34. 9. Oh! fear the Lord, ye his Saints, i. e. Pay him all the respect, the reverence, and adoration which is his due; Thus Deut 6. 13. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his Name.* What we are here to understand by the *fearing of God*, may be learnt from those words of our Saviour; which are a comment upon this Text, *Matth. 4. 10. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Here our Lord explains the word [*fear*] by worship; So that frequently in the sacred writings we meet with the word [*fear*] importing the whole worship of God. In this sense are we to take the word [*fear*] in the Text: And the following word [*serve*] is Exegetical of the former, and likewise shews, that by the word [*fear*] we are to understand a worshipping, and an adoring of the True God.

Then as to the word [*serve*] it also imports the worshipping of God, look back but to *verse 10.* of this Chapter, and hence you may learn the meaning of this word. For there is it said; *And they cryed to the Lord, and said, we have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth; But now deliver us out of the hands of our Enemies, and we will serve thee.* Where the *serving of God* is put in opposition to the *serving of Baalim, and Ashtaroth*, and so plainly denotes the worshipping of God. So that the thing which *Samuel* here presses the *Israelites* to, is the paying that homage, that honour, and adoration to the great *Jehovah*, to the only immortal God, which are his due. He would have them to give over the worshipping their *Baalim*, and their *Ashtaroth*; to renounce all Heathen Deities, and to betake themselves intirely to the service of the only True God.

(2.) I am to explain what it does import to *serve, and fear God in truth, and with all the Heart.* And here,

(1.) What it is to *serve, and worship God in truth.* Now to *serve God in truth* is to worship him in a way, and a manner of his own appointment. It is to present him him with
such

such services as he himself has Authorized. So that it is put in opposition to all false worship. For *Samuel* does here caution the *Israelites* against all Idolatrous, and Superstitious usages; against all kind of worship that has not the stamp of Divine Authority put upon it, for no worship can be pleasing to God, but what can plead a Divine warrant. Whatever pompous Devotions, and gaudy Ceremonies men may adopt into their worship, if they cannot shew a Commission from Heaven for them, God will abhor them, altho their esteem may be ne're so much buoyed up by Mens approbation, and applause. God's will, and command is the Rule of worship, not Mens teeming fancies; Therefore it is a sin against God, an affront to his Sovereignty for any man, or any society of Men, to use any other sort of worship, than that God has legitimated by his own Command. Wherefore God rebuking the sinful compliance of the Jews with the Idolatrous worship of the Heathen nations condemns their practices, as sinful, because they were not bottom'd upon any command of his, *Jerem. 19 5. They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their Sons with fire, for burnt-offerings unto Baal; which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind.* They had no injunction from God for the warranting such a kind of worship, that was enough to render it unlawful. They acted without a Commission, therefore was it false worship, and sore displeasing to God. Now worship may be false. Either,

- (1.) With respect to the *Object*. Or,
- (2.) With respect to the *Medium of Worship*.

(1.) Worship may be false with respect to the *Object* of it. As when persons terminate that worship, which is only due to the great God, on any Created, and finite being, when they pay that homage and adoration to the Creature, which ought entirely to be confin'd to the glorious Creator: either when they limit their Devotions to the Creature, with a total neglect of the Almighty God; and substitute some other person, or thing in his Room to be the *Object* of their Religious adorations. Thus some besotted wretches worship the Devil; pay their homage to the Prince of Darkness, as if *He were* the God who made them. A piece of Idolatry practis'd amongst many of the Inhabitants of *Florida*; and the Natives of *Virginia*, were formerly

formerly no strangers to it, and generally in the *Southern America* they have set up the destroyer of Souls for their Deitie.

*Lastant. de
origin. error.
Cap. 14.*

Some have worshipped the Hosts of Heaven, the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars. Nay, the Jews themselves, tho' instructed in the true worship of God, became so sottish as to take up this piece of Idolatry in imitation of their Heathen Neighbours: for it is said, *Jer. 19. 13. And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the Kings of Judah shall be defiled as the place of Tophet, because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burnt Incense unto all the Host of Heaven.* Strange! that a people favoured with so many stupendious Miracles, to render the belief of the Messages of God to them the more easie, should be so soon drawn away to the worshipping of the Celestial Luminaries! one would have thought that the many excellent priveledges they were blessed with beyond others; and the excellent informations they had from the inspired Prophets, should have sufficiently fortified them against so gross a piece of Idolatry. But we are told, *2 Kings 17. 16. That they left all the Commandments of the Lord their God, and made them Molten Images, even two Calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the Hosts of Heaven, and served Baal.*

Others, as the ancient *Persians* have set up Fire for their God, and with a blind Zeal have paid it their Devotions. *Matth. Theat. Histor. p. 13.* says, *Chaldaei ignem sacrum pro Deo coluerunt*; that the *Chaldeans* also worshipped sacred Fire; and he assigns the reason of it. *Cum enim audierant Sacrificia à Sanctis Patriarchis oblata, Igne caelitus delapso Incensa, & consumpta esse; non Deum, cujus potentia illud fiebat, sed ipsum Ignem colere stolidi ceperunt.* They paid this Reverence to the Element of Fire, because they had heard that it consumed the Sacrifices which were offered up by the ancient Patriarchs.

But the *Egyptians*, on the contrary, chose out the Element of Water for their Deity; and to make their devout Addresses to the Banks of their famous *Nilus*. Hereupon, says *Julius Firmicus, de Errore, Prof. Relig. p. 2. Ægypti incolæ Aquarum beneficia percipientes, Aquam colunt, Aquis supplicant, Aquas super-*

supersticiosa votorum continuatione venerantur. The Egyptians perceiving the great advantages of the Element of Water, worship the Waters, pray to them, and address them with their repeated superstitious Vows.

*Vid. Calpi Rhodigian
lectiones Antiquas.
p. 1439.*

Others again, altho' they worship God, yet they admit either Angels, or Men, or some other creature, to share with God in their devotional Addresses. Thus many amongst the Heathens have adored sinful Men, whose Vices gave them their Divinity, and whose Crimes were their Consecrations. *Bacchus*, and *Venus*, were numbred amongst their Deities, and had their respective Homages paid them. *Vid. Cæcil. Cyprian. de Idolorum vanitat. p. 2. and Minut. Felix. de Idolorum vanitat. p. 27.* says *sanè, & Acca Larentia, & Flora, Meretrices propudiosa, inter Romanorum Deos computanda.*

Others have adored Men famous for their Virtue, or eminent for some notable Exploits, or some remarkable Achievements. Thus the Heathens advanced their *Hero's* into the number of their Gods, and the Papiſts pay Divine Honours to their Cannonized Saints: For nothing more common with these latter, than to address their supplications to *St. Francis*, and *St. Dominick*, the *Virgin Mary*, &c.

But such a Worship as this is false-worship, because terminated upon a wrong Object; and is a most apparent affront to the great God, who will not have this honour given to another, *Iſa. 42. 8. I am the Lord, that is my Name, and my glory will I not give to another.* To pay a Religious respect to any other than God, is an exprels violation of the first command; which peremptorily says, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.* The Worship of the *Samaritans* of old, which was of this sort, was therefore censured by our Saviour with an, *Ye worship ye know not what, John 4. 22.*

Samuel well knowing the temper of the *Israelites*, how prone they were to relapse into Idolatries; how ready to present their Devotions to the Heathen Deities, does here advise them to serve God in truth, with an utter rejection of all the Heathen Idols whatever. He would have them to confine their Worship only to the true God, to the glorious *Jehovah*, in opposition to all false Gods, and *Gentile* Deities. For God is the only proper Object of Religious Worship;

therefore, says our Saviour, *Matth. 4. 10. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Persons ought to worship him exclusively, without admitting any into Partnership with him. For he will not suffer a Rival in his Honour, *Psal 50. 15. Call upon me (not upon a Saint, or an Angel) in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.* None have power to save as God, therefore none should have such honour as he.

(2.) Worship may be false as to the *Medium* of it. God has declared in his sacred Word, in what way, and by what means he will be honoured, and adored. He knows what ways of Worship are most suitable to his own Nature, and so what will be most acceptable to himself: Therefore it is no way reasonable that in these matters every man should be left to his own wild fancy. For we find from experience, that when persons have taken upon them a liberty, or licence rather, to prescribe Modes of Worship, they have fixed upon such trifling, such ludicrous, and sometimes barbarous Rites, as nothing comport with so holy, so merciful, so awful a Being as God is; so that God himself has all the reason to determine of those Modes by which he will be honoured, and adored. And he has positively prescribed the way in which he will have men to pay him Homage. As our Worship must be confined to God, as the solitary Object of it; so the way of it must be limited by his sacred Will. Men must not make their own Imaginations the Rule of Worship. That is not currant Coin which has not *Cæsar's* Image and Supercription upon it; and that is not true and warrantable Worship, which has not the stamp of a Divine Authority. - God has set us bounds in the Matter of his Worship, to which we dare not make any additions, and from which we are not allowed to make any defalcations, *Dent. 4. 2. Ye shall not add to the Word,*

Word, which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the Commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you. A like passage you find, Deut. 12. 32. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it, thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish therefrom. God will not allow any Men to make either additions to, or subtractions from his own Worship. If Men substract from the Worship of God, and wilfully neglect what he has prescribed, they daringly affront his Sovereignty, and quarrel at his Commands. If they add to his Institutions, and appoint more parts of Worship than he has done, they arraign his Wisdom; as if he had not contrived wisely enough for his own Honour; as if he wanted wisdom for the Instituting of his own Worship. It savours of an intolerable piece of Arrogancy for any Man to presume, that he can prescribe to God, or make any advantageous additions to his own Appointments. Such an one forgets the narrowness of his own Intellectuals, as well as the All-comprehensiveness of the Divine VVisdom. He does but display his own folly, who goes about to teach the Omniscient Deity what ought to be adopted into his VVorship. But to conclude this; God must not be worshipped according to the little Model of our fancies, but according to his own Appointments. Not according to our Inventions, but his own Institutions; not according to our Imaginations, but according to the Line of his own Revelations; not according to Men's extravagant suggestions, but his own wise prescriptions. VVhoever offers to God a VVorship which he has not authorized, does not serve him, but rather affront him. Hence it was that *Samuel*, studying, and designing the good and welfare of the Israelitish People, advises them to offer to God a true VVorship, a VVorship which he would approve, and accept;

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that

that so he might still continue to be their propitious Governour, and their bountiful Benefactor.

(2.) As persons must worship God with a worship that is true, as to the matter of it, so it must be right as to the manner; it must be offered to the glorious Object of it with all the heart. As fearing, and serving of God in truth, is here in my text, put in opposition to all false worship, so I humbly conceive, the serving of God with all the heart, is put in opposition to all dissimulation, and Hypocrisie. Too many worship God with their bodies, when their hearts are estranged from him. They offer him the outward Man, and deny him the Soul; Present him with the Carcass of devotion, when as there is no spirit to animate it. They give him the bended knee, and the hand lifted up, whilst their minds are wandring after Vanity. Of such kind of worshippers as these is the complaint, Matth. 15. 8, 9. *This people draweth nigh to me with their mouths, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.* Were there no more bodies, sometimes in the most thronged Assemblies, then there are Souls, how small would the number be? How often do men dissemble in their Duties, and offer to their God a skin instead of a Sacrifice; so that altho their worship may be pompous, yet it is not sincere, and will not meet with acceptance from him, who looks beyond the surface, and penetrates the very secrets of the Soul. God does not only expect that worship men present him should be true, as to the matter, but sincere, as to the manner. Some in the Duties of Religion are just like a person who takes his Scabbard, and offers it to his prince but employs his sword in another's service. They will bring their bodies into the places of worship, and put them in a posture of reverence, whilst their affections perhaps shall be committing folly with some darling Idol, erected in the fancy. But in
vain

vain do such worshippers presume upon *accepta nec*. An all-seeing eye easily discerns the fallacie, and a God of truth abominates it. When the Soul, the choicest part of man, as Engaged in his worship, is actively employed in his service, then does he smell a sweet savour in it, *Pro. 23. 26. My Son give me thy heart.* In all the Solemn and Sacred duties, which men do perform, in all the Devotions they present to their God, he demands their hearts and affections; without which, all the most glittering shews, and gaudy pretences imaginable will amount to no more than a specious vanity. *Lactantius, de. justit. Lib. 5. Cap. 20.* speaking of the excellency of the Christian Religion as unconceivably surmounting that of the Heathen, says, *Illic nihil exigitur aliud, quam sanguis pecudum, & fumus, & inepta libatio, hic bona mens, purum pectus, innocens vita.* Go amongst the Heathens and there is nothing but the blood of beasts, a little vanishing smoke, and ridiculous Sacrificing: but with us there is a good mind, a pure heart, and an innocent life. The Christians presented God not with slain beasts, but with pure hearts: And says the same Author, just before, *Nostra Religio tota in animo colentis est, quia mentem ipsam pro Sacrificio habet;* Our Religion lies in the mind of the worshipper, and we offer up our Souls to God for a Sacrifice. But too too many Christians of latter ages have strangely degenerated from the primitive practice, and have sat down satisfied with a few external, and lazy devotions. Amongst the Papists it must be confessed, they have a very pompous, theatrical worship; but there is little of Soul or Spirit in it.

Many amongst those of the Reformed Churches are too prone to please themselves with some externals of worship, and splendid formalities. But alas! the most accurate external observances will ne're attract the favourable eye of God; when there is an absence of the heart.

All.

All acceptable worship must arise from the Center of the Soul, for *God is a Spirit*, John 4. 24. and nothing will please him but a spiritual worship.

Well then the affections must animate all our devotions, and the whole heart must be found an ingredient in all our services: All the powers, all the faculties of the Soul must be seriously imployed in every part of worship we at any time engage in, not only the understanding to apprehend the nature of the duties they are to perform, but the will, and affections must be active too. Every faculty ought to be vigorous, and wakeful, when persons are making their Religious addresses to the glorious King, no power should be dull, or sleepy. As for instance, in the duty of Prayer, the whole Soul ought to be engaged in it. The understanding should be imployed in the consideration of God's glorious perfections, of our unworthiness to appear before him, of the many wants we labour under, and of Gods (both) ability & readiness to supply all our necessities. The will ought to be engaged in purposing the renuntiation of the sins which we own in confession, and in resolving a discharge of the duties, which we beg the grace to perform. Our affections should all be shining, and active, when we view over the glorious perfections of the Deity, such as Almightyness, Immensity, Infinite knowledge, Justice, and holiness; we should call up the passion of fear, see to have our minds possessed with a Reverential awe at the thoughts of so tremendous a Majesty. When we recount his Grace, and his Mercy, his Goodness and his Bounty, our Souls should be enflamed with love. Our hatred should rise against sin when we acknowledge it, with its heightning circumstances; and our desires should be carried out with a great deal of warmth after grace, and glory. Thus, when the powers of the Soul have each their respective activities in duty, then is God served with all the heart. (3.)

(3.) The third particular I proposed to speak to, is the Motive employed to inforce the duty prescribed. The consideration of the great things which God has done for a people, should be a powerful argument with them to induce them to serve the Lord in truth, and with all the heart. The Command of God does oblige, and should engage persons to serve, and adore him with sincerity, zeal, and affection. But God's mercy, his goodness, & his bounty should be an additional perswasive: When God with gracious, and merciful providences attends a people, it is but equitable they should return him A tribute of thanks, and adoration. Signal favours, and seasonable deliverances strongly plead with them to present him with their best, and their choicest services: Such returns as these should persons make.

(1.) Upon the account of *Gratitude*: Men ought to make thankful returns to their glorious preserver, and their bountiful benefactor, for all the miracles of mercy he has shewed them. When the arm of the Lord has brought them Salvation, they should express their thankful sense of it by devout adorations, & a loyal observance of all his injunctions. The *Israelites* had an ample experience of the indulgent care of Heaven towards them; God in his wise and powerful providence often appeared so signally for them, as that it was to the astonishment of their enemies, and their own admiration. What an amazing, what a surprizing deliverance did he gloriously accomplish for them at the Red-Sea? In what a miraculous way did he support, and sustain them, during their long peregrination in the Wilderness! In how wonderful a manner did he introduce them into the promised Land, and settle them there! what astonishing victories did he often give them over their enemies; when as the number of the *Israelites* was but small, and the armies of the *Alien*, like to the sand of the Sea innumerable.

numerable? God made them formidable to all the nations about them, Crowned them with admirable successes ; and made them glorious by an unusual train of providences. He stopt the course of the Sun in the Heavens to make the longer day, that they might have time enough to compleat the conquest of their Enemies. Many times when the confidence of their foes was advanced, when they threatned high, and the *Israelites* were involved in apparent danger, had no prospect of an escape, then, in their extremity, has God brought them Salvation. Now certainly ingenuity, and gratitude should promote such a people, so blessed, so wonderfully preserved, so signally owned by God, to fear, and serve him in truth, and with all the heart. *Gratitude* obliged them to a most punctual observance of all his Commands, to a most cordial, and sincere performance of all the duties he had prescribed them. If God in an illustrious manner saves a people from ruine, if he favours them with peculiar priveledges, and advances them above their Neighbours by his choice, and extraordinary blessings, it will be the blackest ingratitude in such, to neglect his worship, or to put him off with a few Hypocritical devotions. Is it commendable for a people to trifle in their worshipping of that God, who has made his perfections Conspicuous in their safety? Where is the Justice of it when persons are made eminent by their mercies, it is but reasonable they should give God the glory of it, by the most Cordial, and lively devotions. When *Moses* had recounted the great things which God had done for *Israel* at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness, he said to them, Deut. 10. 12. *And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy Soul.*

(2) Persons should make a return of their hearty devotions

votions to their God, for the great things he has done for them, likewise in point of VVifdom ; That God might again appear for them in the times of their danger, and distrefs. It is no part of wifdom for a people to affront their God, to provoke their glorious preferver, or to Engage an Almighty power againft them. I therefore it is a madnefs in any, after God has fignally appeared for, and delivered them, to flight his worship, to difsemble in their devotions, and to mock with an infinite Majefty ; For this is the way to have the divine Providence as Confpicuous in their deftruction, as it was before eminent in their Salvation. This will engage him againft them as an Enemy ; who before appeared for them in the Relation of a Friend. Therefore it is a piece of commendable Policy in a People to be fincere Adorers of their God, efpecially after unusual, and furprizing Deliverances, that fo he may continue to fuccour, and fave them in their Straits and Dangers, he may ftill fecure them from the Rage and Violence of their Defigning Enemies ; that he may defend and protect them, when fubtle Heads, and powerful Hands are attempting their Ruine ; that when Plots, and bafe, and barbarous Defigns are framing againft them, he may fuddenly blaft, and totally difappoint them. Knowing this, that as God has done great things for a People, fo he will continue to be friend, and to blefs them, if they will be but Loyal, and dutiful, and fincere in their Adorations of him. For, fays God, *1 Sam. 2. 30. Them that honour me, I will honour ; i. e. Thofe who adore, and worship me with a Religious Fear, and with Devout Hearts, according to my own Inftitutions, I will honour them, I will advance them to Dignity, I will make them glorious, and prosperous. That therefore was good Advice of David to*

his Son Solomon, 1 Chron. 28. 9. *And thou Solomon, my Son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing a mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.*

U S E.

(1.) I shall apply this Truth by way of Reprehension; and this condemns,

(1.) Those who neglect to fear and serve God with all their hearts, although God has done great things for them. Many amongst us are justly chargeable with gross Ingratitude on this score. God has been pleased to Plant the Gospel in its Purity among us, and has now preserved it with us for many years, in spite of all the Rage of Hell, and Malice of R. me. God has hitherto by a series of gracious Providences, secured to us our Civil and Religious Liberties, whereas our Enemies at home and abroad have been employing all their Skill and their Cunning, all their Power and Interest to wrest them from us. They have been unwearied in their contriving Methods to Enslave, and Ruine us: But the success has not been answerable to their restless Endeavours, and their matchless Diligence: No, the watchful Shepherd of our *Israel* has observed all their bloody and mischievous Designs, and has been as careful to prevent and defeat them, as they have been studious to hatch, and contrive their Villanies. How often has the Divine Providence interposed for us, sheltred us from Threatning Storms; when we were in danger, and knew it not? How many

Eminent

Eminent Deliverances has he wrought out for us, when we saw no Design against us, till it was render'd visible by the defeat? Yet after all these Admirable displays of the Divine Mercy and Goodness, how little is God served, or sincerely worshipped amongst us? How do Men trifle in their Duties? and complement with their God by their External Devotions? Men of all Perswasions pretend a great deal of Zeal for the Worship of God; nothing more dear to them, if you will believe what their Tongues avow; yet when they come to engage in this Worship, of which they seem so fond, how much coldness and carelessness do they betray and discover? Their hearts and affections do not keep them company in their Duties. But, where is the Equity of such a Carriage? What! Has God signally owned us? Has he been our glorious Protector? *Psal. 126. 2. Has he filled our Tongues with laughter*, and the Faces of our Enemies with shame and confusion? And shall we slight his Worship? Shall we offer him a dead Devotion without the heart? This will be unreasonable, not administering the least shadow for a defence. Those words of *Moses* are applicable enough to such ungrateful Wretches, *Deut. 32. 6. Do ye thus requite the Lord, oh foolish people, and unwise! Is not he thy Father which hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?* Was it not he, who delivered us from the Romish Yoke? who rescued us from Popish Tyranny? Has he not made us a prosperous, and a flourishing Nation? made us great, and glorious in the Eyes of our Neighbours? and Established the Reformed Religion amongst us? And shall we dare to provoke such a God with our Formalities, and Hypocrisies, our fruitless and heartless Devotions? Oh! be ashamed

of an Ingratitude so black and inexcusable!

(2.) This condemns also those, who are so far from being encouraged to serve God from the consideration of the great things he has done for us, that they murmur at, and are discontented with their own mercies. They are dissatisfied with God's gracious Providences. They fret, and storm, and repine, because God has delivered us. Own they will not that God has done any great thing for us in the late happy Revolution. The mercies which God has been pleased to hand to us by our King, they account their misfortune, and are ready to vote them oppression. They are uneasie because they cannot be in Slavery. Our safety is their sorrow, and our liberty is their bondage. They can see nothing of a gracious Providence in the King's Settlement upon the Throne. All those wonderful, and signal Successes, which God has granted him, have not been able to open their Eyes, or to make them to see the kindness of Heaven to us. A Crown upon a Protestant head is the matter of their grief, and nothing will content them but a Popish Governour. They would have a King, who is an Enemy to their Religion, their Liberties, and their Peace. A strange Infatuation! that any persons professing the Protestant Religion, loving their own Country, valuing their own Laws, and Government, studious of their own Tranquility, should be governed by such a Temper! whilst the late King *James* was upon the Throne encouraging the Popish Party, visibly driving to *Rome* with a full Career; then they were uneasie, till they had dismissed him from the Government; they concluded, (as justly they might) that they could not long be safe, if such Throngs of Priests and Jesuits were admitted to croud about the

the Throne. But now the Tyde is turned, and he that was before so much their Dread, is now their Darling; his Return is now eagerly desired, whose Absence before they could have wished for. Now, it must be supposed, he has been taught more Mildness, and Mercy, more Faithfulness, and Veracity in the French Court; and is now formed into a loving Temper to Protestants. We must now imagine that his long Converse with some of the Most Violent, and Cruel of the Catholics, has much abated his Rigour, calmed his Spirit, and sweetned him into Lenity. The discontented Party would have us believe, that the late King, having been provoked by the Loss of Three Kingdoms, having been more fully instructed in the Politicks of *France*: having been exasperated by the suggestions of the Papists about him; is now the better qualified for the Government of a Protestant People. They promise themselves, that he will be all Clemency and Kindness to them; that he will be studious of their Interest, and they have expectations of I know not what immense Advantages which will accrue to them, in case he should be restored. But alas! these unthinking persons do strangely forget what they actually suffered, and what they were farther in danger of suffering under the late Reign. They are of the Temper of the discontented *Israelites*, whose cry it was, *Numb*, 14. 4. *Let us make a Captain, and let us return to Egypt.* They forgot the Miracles at the Red-Sea, and in the Wilderness. Although God was bringing about of their compleat Deliverance, and their comfortable Settlement, yet were they discontented. They would return to their former Bondage. They had rather go back, and lie down under *Pharaoh's* cruel Oppression, than
that

that God by *Moses* should deliver them. Thus many amongst us, are so lamentably besotted that they had rather have their necks galled with a Romish Yoke, than accept of deliverance from the hand of a Protestant, of a reformed Prince. This is horrible ingratitude both to God, and their King.

(2.) By way of advice; I would persuade all persons amongst us, to *fear, and serve God in truth, and with all the heart.* Do not dissemble with an All-knowing God in your Devotions. Let your affections animate all your duties. Keep close to the ways of worship of God's own prescription. Take not up with any superstitious dotages of Men: Worship God according to his own Institutions, and not according to Mens fancyful inventions. See that all your Religious services be such as God does require, both as to the matter and the manner of them too. To encourage you to this, I would lay before you no other Motive, than what is offered you in my Text. *For consider how great things the Lord hath done for you.*

Consider the many favours, and blessings which the bounty of Heaven has indulged us. God has planted the reformed Religion in these Lands, and made it a national Establishment. He has favoured us with excellent civil Priviledges, and Immunities. He has continued these blessings now with us for many years, notwithstanding the many daring impieties, and Rebellions with which we provoked him: Altho' we have despised the riches of his goodness, slighted his mercy, and taken no care to make suitable returns to his bounty; yet has he not made us desolate, nor permitted our restless Enemies to ravish from us our priviledges either Civil, or Sacred. He has brought us most excellent,

cellent, and wonderful Salvations, when our case has been deplorable, and we just upon the brink of ruine.

It was not long since we had a Popish Governour seated upon the *English* Throne, swaying the Scepter according to the directions of Popish Council. Then they attempted to Subject us to the *Romish* Yoke. and to introduce amongst us the Idolatries, and Superstitions of the *Romish* Church. Had we but continued a few years longer under that Government, in all probability we might have seen all our Religious, and Civil Liberties torn from us. For where ever Popery comes, it brings Idolatry into the Church, and usually slavery into the state.

The design which was then on foot, was to have reduced us to the Posture of *France*, to have made us Slaves, and Idolators. And had not our Gracious God happily prevented them, by the late seasonable revolution; instead of a well-limited Monarchy in the state, we should have smarted under a barbarous Tyranny. Instead of Religion, and true worship in the Church, we should have been over-run with multitudes of Superstitious Fopperies, and unwarrantable devotions. In lieu of Solid Gospel truths to have been preached to publick Auditorys, we should have been entertained with nothing but Legendary Stories from the Priests, and Monks, of equal truth with the most fablous Romance. Instead of Devout prayers, in our own Tongue, we should have been put off with a little Latine Service, with some *Ave Maria's* & *pater nosters*. Beads would have been more frequently handled than our Bibles. Instead of the Compleat Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we should have had only a Part of it; the Cup being denyed the Layity by the Church of *Rome*.

To

To conclude, Instead of an Indulgence to tender Consciences, we should have been Treated with fire, and faggot, with all the Severities, and Cruelties that Popish Malice could have suggested.

But blessed be the Lord, who *gave us not a prey to their Teeth*, Pf. 124.6. He by a gracious, & an unexpected providence prevented these miseries which threatned us. He sent, our, *Moses* amongst us, to secure, and deliver us from our, more, than *Egyptian Foes*. He opportunely conducted our King to the British shore, led him on, without blood, or opposition to the Throne, there he seated him to the general joy of the Nation, and to the Confusion of our avowed Enemies; where still he sits, to the satisfaction of the most, and the best of his Subjects.

But yet it must be confessed that a Malignant party amongst us, envy him, his Honour and Advancement, and are troubled to see so much vertue mounted to a Throne. They grieve, that one so fitted for Government, one so tender of our safety, one so concerned for the preservation of the Protestant Religion, one so much an Enemy to an Arbitrary sway, should be graced with a Crown.

Hereupon they have been incessantly contriving how they might divest him of his Regal dignity, and give him a remove from so high a Station. They have for many years successively been prosecuting Methods for the depriving him of his Life, and Throne. But that powerful providence, which raised him so high, has hitherto been his guard, and defence. It has been glorious in his protection, and his enemies defeat.

But of late all their consults, and designs were
just

just brought to an issue, for they resolved with a desperate party of Men well armed, and equipped to have assaulted the King in his Coach ; there to have killed, and murdered him. Some of them were to have set upon the Guards, whilst others were to have been employed in the barbarous Assassinating of his Royal Person. And as soon as they should have accomplished their bloody design, and have Executed their Hellish purpose, they would have embroyled the Nation, by the universal insurrection of the dissatisfied party. Then all this was to have been followed with an invasion from *France*. Inhumane vilany! What! to seek to take off the Life of so excellent, so courageous, so merciful, so just a Prince by a Clandestine Murder. What! to raise an unnatural War in our own bowels! And to invite over the barbarous *French* to execute their horrid cruelties amongst us! Oh! how base! how black a design was this!

But what great things hath the Lord done for us! He timely detected this Inhumane vilany, he has brought into a clear Light their bloody design; He has turned their subtle contrivance into foolishness. He has made some of the Conspirators themselves to be the discoverers of this Matchless Treason. And maugre all their Hellish Projects, our King is in safety, our Nation is in peace; and the mischief these Miscreants designed for the best of Princes, is fallen upon their own heads, so that we can Joyfully sing with the Psalmist, *Psalms* 9. 16. *The wicked is snared in the Work of his own Hands*. Higgaiou Selah.

But that we may the more fully apprehend the great things God has done for us in defeating of this barbarous design. Let us consider.

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(1.) The

(1.) The person, whose life these Base, and Bloody Assassines would have taken off. The life of a Protestant Prince, of a great General, Eminent for Courage and Conduct, of one, who, under God, is the safety of the Nation; the Cement of the Confederacy against the power of *France*: Of one, who Rules us with all mildness, and clemency according to our own Laws, and Constitutions, and exposes his dear Life in the high-places of the Field every year, for the preservation of the Protestant Religion, and our Nation's security. How readily does he endure all the Fatigues of War? And to what great dangers does he expose His Royal Person continually? How forward is he to face the Enemy in the Field, and to stand the shock of all their war-like assaults?

He is a King, who seeks not to advance his own Prerogative, by trampling upon the Liberties of the Subject, nor studies to make himself great by the oppression of his People. But he is one, who makes our safety, our interest, and our happiness his own. What a Vilany then must it needs be! to endeavour secretly to Assassinate so brave, so excellent, so vertuous, and so renowned a Prince? This enhances the crime, and makes it look with the blackest hue.

(2.) Consider, what in all probability, would have been the fatal consequences of the Execution of this bloody design; We should have been infested with all the miseries, and doleful Calamities, which are the usual products of Intestine Wars. Savage cruelties would have been exercised towards innocent, and peaceable men. The Swords of our Male-con-
tents

tents would have been drawn, and have been sharpened into a very great keenness, by the assistance they were to have had from *France*: Animated by *French* Dragoons what barbarities would they not have been guilty of. And if a Gallick Army had invaded us, what Cruelties, what inhumanities, what grievous oppressions must we have expected from them! could we have hoped for any thing of mildness or mercy from those, who have for many years, been trained up in blood, and violence; been all along accustomed to spoil, and rapine! They, being our profest Enemies, on the account of Religion, they would have thence been animated to have treated us with all the Rage, and Rigour, and Cruelty imaginable. They would have fired our Towns, defaced, and demolished our places of worship, seized upon our Treasures, slain our young Men, with the Sword, desflowered our Virgins, made havock of our delectable things; and have fallen upon us with all the rage, and insolence of Papists, and Souldiers. For how can we conceive that they would have done less, than have acted so dismal a tragedy, in an Enemy's Country? Oh! what man of sense, of honour, or Religion would have engaged in so base, so villanous a design, to have enslaved, to have ruined, to have destroyed, and laid waste the Land of his Nativity? Heathens have often Sacrificed their lives for the safety of their Country; but here we had Christians, pretended Members of the National Established Church, Embarked in a design to deluge their Country with the worst of miseries. Oh! Unparalleled Villany! Some of the Conspirators pretended it to be the Cause of God, in which they were engaged, and that they designed the good of the Church;

so that it seems, like those of Old, *Mic.* 3. 10. *They were for building up of Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity.* So that they would have built their Church with the ruins of the Nation, and have cemented it with the blood of the Slain. Let us learn to rate the greatness of the Deliverance, from the dismal Consequences of the Design, if it should have succeeded.

(3.) Consider, that this Bloody and Villanous Conspiracy was just ripe for Execution. The Assassins were ready to have dispatched the King : They were prepared to have given the Assault, waiting only for the Critical Moment which might favour their Design. They impatiently expected the King's motion abroad, that they might have had an opportunity to practise their intended Villany. Multitudes of the Discontented Party were prepared for an Insurrection. The *French* were in a readiness to have made a Descent upon us with their formidable Troops. The generality of the Nation began to be uneasy at home, because of the badness of our Money : Our Enemies were confident of their Success. And were little, or nothing sensible of our Danger. Thus were we just upon the brink of Ruine : But Divine Providence interposed, suddenly crushed this subtle Contrivance, prevented the Fatal Blow which was intended ; detected the Plot, laid open the Design, and turned the Intended Mischief upon the Heads of the Barbarous Conspirators. How illustriously, has the Divine Goodness appeared in revealing this Secret Wickedness, when it was just arrived at the Accomplishment ! Certainly he must be wretchedly blind, who cannot yet see the great things God has done for us.

(4.) Now

(4.) Now let us consider the signal Mercies we do yet enjoy, notwithstanding all the Malice and Designs of our Inveterate Enemies. Our King is yet in Safety, and our Nation in Peace. We yet enjoy the Worship of God without Idolatry ; we have Liberty without Slavery. The Sword does not ravage in the midst of our Bowels. Every one sits down joyfully *under his own Vine, and his own Fig-Tree ; and there is none to make us afraid*, Micah 4. 4. We live under the Conduct of Gentle Governours, who do not make us to bend under a Gallick Yoke, nor Reign over us with an *Egyptian* Rigour. They do not Rule us with Rods of Iron, nor Scepters of Steel : But they treat us with all the Lenity and Mildness, with all the Justice and Righteousness that the most discontented amongst us can possibly expect. Can persons have the vanity to suppose that we should be full as easie under the Government of a Popish Power ! Can they believe that the late King (now more fully taught the Methods of Persecution and Severity in the *French* Court) would upon his return, (which God prevent) be more tender of our Lives, our Liberties, or more intent upon the promoting of our common Tranquility ? What Man of thought, or penetration can ever give admittance to so groundless a supposition ?

Well, notwithstanding the restless Malice of our Enemies, Heaven showers down a plenty of Mercies incessantly upon us. Let us thankfully own God as our Bountiful Benefactor in the bestowment of them, as our Glorious Protector, in continuing to us the quiet and peaceable possession of them. We have many Eminent Blessings both Civil, and Sacred, which

which our Enraged Adversaries have not as yet been able by Cunning or Power to ravish from us. Let our God have the glory of all. Let the consideration of our present Tranquillity engage us to fear God, and to serve him in Truth, and with all our heart. Let us no more put him off with heartless, and hypocritical Devotions. Let all our Services be accompanied with Sincerity. God was real in our Deliverance, let us be real in our Duties. Let our warmest Affections animate all our Devotions. What greater Motive can be propounded to you, to engage you in the cordial Service of your God, than this great, this signal, this eminent Deliverance, which he has so seasonably wrought out for us, *Deut. 11. 7, 8. Your Eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord, which he did, therefore shall ye keep all the Commands which I command you this day.* Own the kindness of Heaven, seen in the safety of the King, and our own Security, by Thankful Lips, and Loyal Obedient Lives. Let us offer him the Sacrifice of Praise; let us magnifie his Name, and grace our Profession by a Religious, an Honest, and a Sober Conversation, that God may not frown upon us; but may continue with us the Blessings of Time, and at last ravish our Souls with the Joys of Eternity.

F I N I S.

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